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EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Keys for the Determination of American Invertebrates. —

Beginning with the next issue the *American Naturalist* will publish a series of synoptical tables or keys for the determination of American invertebrates, each key covering one group. Each article will be prefaced by a brief account of the habits and occurrence of the forms under consideration, with hints for collecting, and will be accompanied by simple illustrations where such are necessary to emphasize points of systematic importance. An American bibliography and the best general references will form a part of each contribution. We have long had the valuable *Manual of Vertebrates* of our distinguished co-editor, Professor Jordan, and the *Naturalist* now strives to supplement in a measure this useful work by publishing synopses or keys for the invertebrates, hoping thus gradually to give to Americans an equivalent of the German 'Leunis,' corresponding to which there is nothing in the English language. The task we have set for ourselves is not an easy one. We cannot hope to cover all the invertebrates of North America, as many groups have been but partially studied, which is true particularly of western and Pacific forms. It will be our effort, however, to present to our readers brief synopses of the present state of our knowledge. We invite correction and criticism, and beg our readers to test our keys to their full capacity; and if they will send to us specimens that they cannot place in the keys, we will undertake to determine and return them. Such coöperation will aid us in enlarging and revising the keys for future issue, and help in perfecting the work we have undertaken — a Manual of Invertebrates. Uniformity of treatment can at first hardly be realized, owing to the many sources from which the contributions must come, but we look forward to the accumulation of material sufficient for the publication of at least one homogeneous volume. Eminent specialists have pledged their coöperation; the first of the series, to appear in the July issue, will deal with the fresh-water Bryozoa.

Outdoor Nature Study. — Any one who has witnessed the struggles of the average unprepared school-teacher with "nature study" knows how much in need she is of a friendly guide to take her out of

doors and teach her what nature really is. An attempt to meet this need is to be made during the summer by the Rhode Island College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, at Kingston, R. I., where a summer school of nature study will be held from July 5-19, provided forty applicants are enrolled before June 1. The program is rather ambitious for the short time allowed, as it includes physiography, botany, zoölogy, and horticulture. But as the work is to be chiefly in the field, if it is skillfully conducted, no doubt most teachers will be able to get from it considerable instruction and a great deal of inspiration for future work.

Vertebrate Ancestry.—The recent attempt by Roule (C. R., October, 1898) to seek the ancestry of the vertebrates in *Actinotrocha*, it seems to us, is the most ingenious and the most improbable of any view yet advanced. It demands that the mouth of *Actinotrocha* becomes the vertebrate neurenteric canal, while the vent forms the vertebrate mouth.

New "American Anthropologist."—It is with genuine pleasure that students of anthropology greet the new *American Anthropologist*, the first number of which appeared in March. The new journal replaces the periodical that appeared under the same name for the last ten years. The change is most welcome and promising. The old *American Anthropologist* served a good purpose. It was the official journal of the Washington Anthropological Society; it became the forum of smaller contributions to anthropology, and it stimulated and preserved many efforts of value, but its scope was too restricted. It was not a fair representative of the science of anthropology in this country, and could not keep up with its advancement. Thus it became evident that either the *American Anthropologist* had to undergo a radical change, or that a new, larger, more representative journal had to be established.

The first practical efforts for the establishing of a new journal of anthropology were due to Dr. Franz Boas, of New York, and Professor Wm. J. McGee, of Washington, who were soon seconded by other anthropologists of prominence. Dr. Boas formulated a definite proposition and brought it before Section H of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at its winter meeting in Ithaca, in December, 1897. The proposition aimed rather at a metamorphosis of the established journal than at beginning a new periodical, the change taking place with the consent and coöperation of the Washington Anthropological Society. Section H of the Ameri-